



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
<http://dnr.state.il.us>

Pat Quinn, Governor
Marc Miller, Director

September 23, 2011

Mr. Sid Stahl, Village President
Village of Princeville
206 North Walnut
P.O. Box 200
Princeville, IL 61559-0200

Re: AT & T Telecommunications Tower and Equipment Shelter Area - Princeville
Endangered Species Consultation Program
Project Number(s): 1202139
County: Peoria

Dear Mr. Stahl:

The Department received a submission from EBI Consulting, via the Department's Ecological Compliance Assessment Tool (EcoCAT) website, on behalf of the Village of Princeville, regarding this project in Section 24, Township 11 North, Range 6 East for consultation in accordance with the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act* [520 ILCS 10/11], the *Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act* [525 ILCS 30/17], and Title 17 *Illinois Administrative Code* Part 1075.

The project, construction of an AT & T 250' self-supporting lattice telecommunications tower, equipment shelter, and 12' wide extension to an existing access drive, will be situated on a 73' X 73' lease area and along an access drive, south of Spring Street, on the west side of Princeville. The proposed project is located northwest of recent records for the State-listed threatened **Franklin's Ground Squirrel**, *Spermophilus franklinii* and areas south and west of the project site have appropriate habitat for this species.

The Department has completed its review of the project and determined that the construction of the cell tower and associated equipment shelter and access road may have an adverse impact on this listed species. To minimize potential impacts, the Department recommends the measures discussed below be implemented by the developer and incorporated in the Village's project authorization.

Recommendations

Franklin's Ground Squirrels (FGS) can usually be found in habitats containing a mix of grasses and woody components, although they can also be found along bike trails (such as the current, known population in Princeville), railroad embankments, park-like settings, grassy openings near

wooded edges, agricultural areas, and within excavated dirt piles. This species lives the majority of its life within a burrow system that can extend up to 8 feet underground and have several tunnels and openings. These squirrels are most active on bright sunny days and spend only approximately 10% of their time outside of the burrows.

If present on-site, both adult and juvenile FGS could be adversely impacted from the following actions:

- The excavation and construction of the cell tower foundation could compact or destroy the burrow system built and used by these ground squirrels;
 - vehicles and equipment used during construction can injure or crush juvenile and adult squirrels;
 - trench work, and the installation of underground power cables, could injure or take FGS ;
 - squirrels could be injured or taken if their underground activities reach conduits being laid and used;
 - vibrations and noise created during construction activities could harass the species and cause them to flee their preferred habitat;
 - the excavation of dirt to establish the work site could disturb hibernation burrows (depending on where it is coming from); and
 - this species may be attracted to disturbed soil/dirt piles created on site which could bring in a population, if not already present.
1. The Department recommends that construction crews, and all on-site personnel working in the vicinity of this project, be educated and informed about Franklin's Ground Squirrels. Photos should be distributed and a site management plan for responding to potential encounters that could occur during the construction phase, should be discussed at the pre-construction meeting.
 2. Barrier fencing should be placed along the southern and western edges of the construction zone to exclude FGS at least two weeks prior to commencement of construction and remain in place until the project is completed.
 3. If the squirrels are encountered at any point in the development of this tower, the Department should be immediately notified (contact Michelle Simone, District Heritage Biologist, 309/446-9181). The squirrels should not be handled in any manner or the action could be considered a 'take'. The Department may then recommend that Incidental Take Authorization (ITA) be pursued from the Department's Office of Resource Conservation, which would result in a conservation plan for the species. Take is defined in the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act as 'to harm, hunt, shoot, pursue, lure, wound, kill, destroy, harass, gig, spear, ensnare, trap, capture, collect, or to attempt to engage in such conduct.
 4. All dirt used for building up the site should come from either off-site, or from flatter mounds on-site, as this species is known for occupying dirt piles. As stated on the site plan, page 4, no dirt should be excavated from areas south, west, or adjacent to the project's footprint.

Consultation on the part of the Department is completed. **In accordance with 17 Ill. Adm. Code 1075.40(h), the Village of Princeville must notify the Department of its decision regarding these recommendations, whether they will:**

- Allow the action to proceed as originally planned;
- Require the action to be modified per Department recommendations (please specify which measures, if not all will be required); or
- Forgo the action.

This consultation is valid for two years unless new information becomes available that was not previously considered; the proposed action is modified; or additional species, essential habitat, or Natural Areas are identified in the vicinity. If the project has not been implemented within two years of the date of this letter, or any of the above listed conditions develop, a new consultation is necessary.

The natural resources review reflects the information existing in the Illinois Natural Heritage Database at the time of the project submittal, and should not be regarded as a final statement on the site being considered, nor should it be a substitute for detailed site surveys or field surveys required for environmental assessments. If additional protected species are encountered during the project's implementation, you must comply with the applicable statutes and regulations. Also, note that termination does not imply IDNR's authorization or endorsement of the proposed action.

Please contact me if you have questions regarding this consultation review.

Cordially,



Kathi Davis
Division of Ecosystems and Environment
Impact Assessment Section
Office of Realty & Environmental Planning
217-785-5500

enclosure

cc: Michelle Simone, IDNR/Region I/Natural Heritage
Byron Paulsen, IDNR/District 7/Wildlife
Mr. Joshua Ryals, EBI Consulting
Charles German, German Bliss Equipment, Princeville